

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

OKLAHOMA BIRDS. Their Ecology and Distribution, with Comments on the Avifauna of the Southern Great Plains. By George Miksch Sutton. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1967: $6\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ in., xlv + 674 pp., 1 col. pl., 28 drawings, 2 maps. \$9.95.

Professionals afar will pick up "Oklahoma Birds" to see how a distinguished ornithologist of cosmopolitan interests will treat the birds of his own (and well-known) region; and indeed they will find that Sutton's attention ranges far beyond the boundaries of the state. Students of the birds of the southern Great Plains will find here a meticulous account of the present and historical status of species. Admirers of Sutton as a person and a writer will relish the anecdotal flavor they have come to expect of him, a style that would infuse warmth and zest into a telephone directory. Only the people who think of Sutton primarily as an artist will be disappointed; the work is illustrated attractively with drawings of birds, but it is not a picture book. The one color plate, a frontispiece used also on the dust jacket, is a head portrait of a Harlan's Hawk with the gleam of life in its eye.

A feature of more than regional interest is Sutton's broad but brief treatment of each order and family of birds represented in Oklahoma. A chapter is devoted to each order and within it each family is introduced by a general discussion. It is here that Sutton expresses some taxonomic views dissenting from the Check-list of North American Birds. He separates the Ralliformes from the Gruiformes; places the Shoveler in the genus *Anas*; the Tree Swallow in *Tachycineta*; the Hermit, Swainson's, and Gray-checked thrushes and Veery in *Catharus*; and the Cardinal in *Pyrhuloxia*. I will admit to being startled to see the Passeriformes designated "Sparrowlike Birds." This term is fully justified by derivation but it is with effort that I stretch the connotations of "sparrow" to cover all members of the perching order.

It is always debatable whether a regional report ought to restrict itself to political or ecological boundaries. Intuitively, many of us lean toward the ecological, but close study often reveals practical difficulties, such as the uncertainty of the limits of many ecological regions and the paucity of information on some parts. Sutton's way of dealing with this dilemma was to address himself primarily to the precise limits and subdivisions of a state, and then to comment in passing about other nearby areas when the information was available and when he deemed it pertinent. This treatment reminds us who think of Oklahoma as a Plains state that it actually contains a wide variety of habitats, ranging from desert through prairie to bottomland forest and comprising perhaps as many as 12 different kinds of areas.

Generally, the work is remarkably free of typographical errors, but Sutton has called my attention to two errors in the names of birds (not Oklahoma birds): the common name of the Short-toed Eagle (not Short-tailed) on page 94 and the generic name *Sarothrura* of the White-spotted Crake on page 159.

This scholarly work will be a landmark not only for Oklahoma but also for the southern mid-continent.—HAROLD MAYFIELD.

THE BOOK OF THE AMERICAN WOODCOCK. By William G. Sheldon. University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1967: $7 \times 10\frac{1}{4}$ in., xx + 227 pp., 58 figs., 30 tables. \$8.50.

Oystercatchers, stilts, avocets, plovers, turnstones, sandpipers, phalaropes—practically all the shorebirds—are abroad by day and readily observed in open habitats. Not so the